

by badly-knitted

Unreliable Witnesses

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The 27th precinct was a pretty rough area of the city; violent robberies weren't unusual, but on the bright side, at least this time no one had been killed. Three people were injured seriously enough to require hospital treatment, but the detectives of the precinct's serious crimes squad had been assured they would live. While Drake and JJ headed to the hospital to interview the victims, Dee and Ryo got lumbered with canvassing the area, looking for anyone who might have seen what had happened.

Questioning witnesses was one of Dee's least favourite aspects of police work. Unfortunately for him, it was also unavoidable. Worse, he'd drawn the short straw and wound up interviewing an elderly couple who claimed they'd seen the whole thing. He was starting to have doubts about the truth of that statement.

"So, you say you saw the robbery?"

"Yep, that's right, sonny! We live right across the street, see? There's the store, right there!" The elderly man, Joseph Katz, pointed to the store across the street and Dee got that sinking feeling; Joe was pointing at the general store, but the scene of the crime was the liquor store next door.

"No, hon," his wife, Alma, piped up, "it was the liquor store, not that nice mister Chen's place."

"Where are my glasses?" Joe muttered, fumbling around until he found them and sliding them on to perch at the end of his nose. "Yep, that's the one!" Well, at least he was pointing to the right place this time. "It was just after nine," Joe continued. I know because I'd been watching that new sitcom and it had just finished."

"Silly old fool. You dozed off halfway through that and didn't wake up again until the news had finished. It was a bit after half past ten, I was sitting by the window, watching the people come and go across the way. I like to do that in the evenings, better than watching TV, never know what you'll see." She winked at Dee. "All the young couples, holding hands and making out, does my old heart good. My old man, he don't have an ounce of romance or anything else left in him. I bet the ladies get their money's worth with you."

Dee shrugged. "I don't get any complaints from the guys either."

Alma's eyes went wide and a grin split her face. "Play both sides of the field, do ya? Now that's the way to live!"

"Let's get back to what you saw last night."

"Oh yes, I was watching that pretty redhead from down the street, I swear she has a new man every week. She and her beau had just driven off when a car pulled up right outside the liquor store, but the engine was still running. That seemed strange so I called to Joe to come have a look."

Joe nodded. "I came over to the window, and I saw three big guys get out. Car was a beat up brown sedan, a Ford."

"No, no," Alma disagreed, "there were only two ordinary looking boys and the car was a blue Chevy, I saw it as clear as I'm seeing you!"

They were dressed in denim jeans and t-shirts, one in white, the other grey. One of them had a shirt worn loose over the top."

Now it was Joe's turn to shake his head. "One had on jeans and a black leather jacket, the other two were in tan chinos and light-coloured t-shirts. They were Asian."

"His eyesight isn't what it used to be," Alma apologised. "They were white boys in their late teens, dark haired. The one in the shirt had a sawn-off shotgun he was tryin' to hide."

"What are you talkin' about, woman? All three had pistols and the one in the leather jacket had a beard. They all ran inside and then there was shootin'. I heard five shots."

"They walked in and there was silence for maybe five minutes, then the shotgun went off. BAM! BAM! Like that. They ran out a few moments later, one of them had a big green holdall, I don't know where it came from, they weren't carryin' it when they went in. They jumped in the back of the car and tore out of there with they tyres squealin', must've left rubber all over the street. Guess there was a getaway driver in the front, but I didn't see him."

"That ain't what happened," Joe protested. "They come harin' out with the money crammed in a couple of grocery bags and the one in the jacket had a few bottles of the good stuff. He jumped in the front and fired up the engine, other two got in the back and they pulled out real smooth, turned left at the junction."

Dee decided he'd had enough, Joe and Alma's bickering was giving him a headache. He stood up, putting his notebook and pen away, and thanked the 'witnesses'.

"You've both been very helpful. If I have any more questions, I'll call you."

"Please do, detective," Alma smiled, giving him an admiring look. "We're always happy to help New York's finest, aren't we, Joe."

"Sure are! It's our civic duty," Joe nodded. "Call again any time."

As the door closed behind him, Dee breathed a sigh of relief. He just hoped Ryo had found a more reliable witness.

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The End

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file.